

HEALTH ADMINISTRATION OFFERS MANY OPPORTUNITIES

The Health Careers Committee, American Academy of Health Administration supplied the information for this paper. Tearsheet requests to Secretary, American Academy of Health Administration, P.O. Box 2243, Rockville, Md. 20852.

Health administration as a profession has advanced markedly within the past few years. It offers a career with a future that is responsive to society's needs. Its practitioners use a number of concepts and techniques which can help in defining health needs and in problem solving. In the health field, as in other areas, decision making has advanced beyond "trial and error" hunches to a more sophisticated analysis of the component parts of a given problem. In addition to the physical sciences, such as statistics and mathematics, the social sciences have contributed to an understanding of the human problems of administration. And a demand has arisen for highly skilled and competent administrative and management specialists who can effectively apply this new knowledge.

Colleges and universities offering specialized programs of study in health administration have responded to the increasing need for such specialists by establishing curriculums that include the theory and practice of administration as a social science. These curriculums draw from many fields—economics, sociology, business administration, psychology, political science, public administration, and a broad spectrum of the behavioral and technical sciences. Combined with study in these areas is study in the field of health itself.

Generally speaking, the health administrator will be working in the area of planning—helping to decide the what, when, and how of an agency's mission and goals. He will be supervising or directing the work of other people. His responsibilities will encompass problems of organization, policy development, personnel administration, fiscal planning, evaluation of programs and activities, development of the physical plant, and a wide range of related functions.

A brief survey of the location of some of these positions and of some of the specific job responsibilities reveals the range of job opportunities.

The estimated number of persons employed in administrative positions in health organizations in 1970 (1) is shown in the box.

Administration of Official Agencies

Many governmental health organizations—public health departments, medical care divisions of welfare departments, rehabilitation agencies, Federal health agencies, and others—require their directors to be physicians. For a variety of reasons,

<i>Health organizations</i>	<i>Estimated number employed</i>
Health departments...	5,000–5,500 public health administrators, administrative officers, program analysts, and program representatives.
Hospitals.....	17,000–17,500 hospital administrators and assistants.
Nursing and personal care homes.....	16,000 nursing home administrators and assistants.
Voluntary health agencies.....	10,000 voluntary health-agency administrators, executives, and field representatives.

however, including the scarcity of physicians with administrative training or experience, an increasing number of organizations are seeking non-medical directors with training and experience in health administration. In addition, a number of other important positions, such as executive assistant or administrative officer, may carry a wide variety of duties and responsibilities designed to support and assist the director in administering the agency. There are also likely to be planning specialists, personnel and fiscal officers, program analysts, and others who are assigned specialized tasks in one or more phases of administration. These positions may require graduate training in public health, public administration, or business administration, experience in a health organization, or a combination of such training and experience.

Administration of Health Care Facilities

As the hospital developed into a highly specialized institution, it required a skilled and trained person to manage its general activities and functions. This is the role filled by the hospital administrator who serves as chief executive of the hospital. He administers and coordinates all activities of the hospital within the general policies established by a governing board.

About two-thirds of the presently employed administrators and assistants work in nonprofit or private hospitals; the remainder work in government hospitals—Federal, State, and local. The rise in professional personnel serving as hospital administrators and assistants is indicated by the increase in the numbers employed in these capacities, from fewer than 9,000 in 1950 to about 12,000 in 1960, to more than 17,000 in 1970.

The graduate program for professional administrators consists of 1 or 2 years of academic study and may include a year of "administrative residence" in a hospital. Thirty-one schools in the

United States offer courses in this field. More schools are expected to open within the next few years.

The approximately 19,000 nursing and personal care homes in the United States also require administrative management. In 1965, an estimated 21,000 persons were employed as nursing home administrators. About 9,000 of these persons had additional duties such as nursing. The 12,000 persons without additional duties probably included some professional or practical nurses, although all 12,000 reported that serving as administrator or assistant administrator was their only job in the home. In 1967, the number of nursing care and related homes had increased to 20,500. Nursing home administrators and assistant administrators in 1970 were estimated to number about 16,000.

Administration of Voluntary Agencies

Voluntary health agencies are nonprofit organizations supported primarily by contributions from the public rather than from governmental sources or endowments. They engage in programs of research, education, and service to individuals and communities in their particular sphere of interest, which is generally a group of related diseases or of related services.

The administrator or executive of the voluntary health agency is responsible for coordinating the activities of paid and voluntary personnel so that an effective program is established. Among his responsibilities are working with the board of directors to set the course of the agency's activities, informing the community of the local health problems and of the resources available to meet them, promoting local fund raising, helping recruit volunteer workers, and carrying the personnel functions of the staff. In the majority of voluntary health agencies, the local units are so small that the person employed as administrator or executive is generally expected also to have specialized skills in one or more of the technical aspects of the local program, for example, in physical therapy, nursing, fund raising, or health education. The positions that place primary emphasis on administration and administrative skills are found more frequently at the State or national level.

The field representative of a voluntary organization is responsible for maintaining contacts through which the State, regional, or national organization and its affiliates communicate with each other and work together. He helps the State

or local executive by acting as a consultant for the agency's program in his community and works with community leaders to set up local programs.

There are about 60 national voluntary health agencies in the United States. Most of the larger ones are members of the National Health Council, which estimates that, in 1970, a minimum of 10,000 were employed in administrative and program professional positions in voluntary agencies.

New Areas of Service

In an intensive effort to provide health services, home health agencies have undergone rapid expansion. New home health agencies have been established in many parts of the country, and existing agencies (usually visiting nurse associations and nursing services of local health departments) have greatly increased their staffs and programs. These agencies are designed to provide services in the home to patients who do not need hospitalization. They have helped maintain family life and reduced the cost of medical care. While most home health agencies are currently administered by nurses, an increased management workload is beginning to create a demand for professionally trained administrators.

An exciting development in the health service industry has been the organization of community health centers in urban and rural areas of poverty. These agencies, for the most part, have been planned in cooperation with community groups. Community representation on policymaking boards and committees, as well as the employment of people from the community, are hallmarks of their operation. At present, the number of community health centers is small, but it is growing as a result of additional activity on the part of Federal, State, and local health agencies. Administrative positions in these centers are being established, and the number of these is expected to increase.

Qualifications for Administrators

Top level administrative positions generally require graduate training. Nevertheless, current manpower demands and the continued expansion of health programs have created opportunities for persons with baccalaureate preparation. Several undergraduate programs provide a major in health administration. Other undergraduate degrees in business administration and the social and biological sciences are also desirable. The Federal Government and some State and local health de-

partments offer, to graduates of 4-year college programs, management internships which provide opportunities for graduate study during, or following completion of, the internship period.

Some health agencies are also beginning to experiment with the use of 2-year college graduates in administrative positions. These programs frequently provide work-study arrangements which allow for continuation of studies toward a baccalaureate degree.

Jobs and Educational Opportunities

The following professional organizations can provide information about career opportunities in health administration:

American College of Hospital Administrators
840 North Lake Shore Drive
Chicago, Ill. 60611

American College of Nursing Home Administrators
P.O. Box 1541
Washington, D.C. 20013

American Hospital Association
840 North Lake Shore Drive
Chicago, Ill. 60611

American Nursing Home Association
P.O. Box 1541
Washington, D.C. 20013

American Academy of Health Administration
P.O. Box 2243
Rockville, Md. 20852

American Public Health Association
1015 18th St., NW
Washington, D.C. 20036

National Health Council, Health Careers Project
1740 Broadway
New York, N.Y. 10019

Information about the Management Intern Program of the Health Services and Mental Health Administration can be obtained from the coordinator of this program, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, Md. 20852.

The Health Services and Mental Health Administration, as well as other State and local health agencies, also offers summer work opportunities to undergraduates. These experiences are helpful in making career choices and should be explored.

Schools of public health at the following universities offer graduate training in public health and, in some cases, also in hospital administration: California (at Berkeley and Los Angeles), Columbia (New York City), Harvard (Boston, Mass.), Hawaii (Honolulu), Johns Hopkins (Baltimore,

Md.), Loma Linda (Loma Linda, Calif.), Michigan (Ann Arbor), Minnesota (Minneapolis), North Carolina (Chapel Hill), Oklahoma (College of Health—Oklahoma City), Puerto Rico (San Juan), Pittsburgh (Pa.), Texas (Houston), Tulane of Louisiana (New Orleans), and Yale (New Haven, Conn.). The deans of these schools of public health can provide information about admission requirements, course offerings, and financial assistance.

The following universities, Meharry Medical College, Nashville, Tenn., and the Medical College of Virginia (School of Hospital Administration), Richmond, offer programs in hospital administration, health administration, or both:

Alabama (Graduate School, Medical Center), Birmingham
Baylor (Graduate School and Army Medical Service School), Fort Sam Houston, Tex.

Chicago (Graduate School of Business), Ill.

Cornell (Graduate School of Business and Public Administration), Ithaca, N.Y.

Duke (Graduate School), Durham, N.C.

Florida, Gainesville

George Washington (Department of Business and Public Administration), Washington, D.C.

Iowa State (Graduate College and College of Medicine), Iowa City

Massachusetts (Department of Public Health), Amherst
Missouri (School of Medicine), Columbia

Pennsylvania State (College of Human Development—undergraduate and graduate), University Park

St. Louis (Graduate School), St. Louis, Mo.

Southern California (School of Public Administration), Los Angeles

Trinity, San Antonio, Tex.

Washington (School of Medicine), St. Louis, Mo.

Schools of business administration and public administration also conduct educational programs which provide preparation for entry into the field of health administration.

Further information about financial assistance under the Federal traineeship program can be obtained from Regional Offices of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Health Services and Mental Health Administration, which are located in Boston, New York City, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, Kansas City, Denver, San Francisco, and Seattle.

REFERENCE

- (1) Health manpower and health facilities, 1971. Health resources statistics. National Center for Health Statistics, Health Services and Mental Health Administration. DHEW Publication No. (HSM) 72-1509, 1971 Edition. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., p. 27.